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Then with the tears gushing from his eyes he

exclaimed with fervor.

"The Lord redeemeth the soul of his ser-

vants; and none of them that trust in him

shall be desolate."

"Elizabeth," said he, "you may select the

parable to night. She quickly turned to

the fifteenth chapter of Luke, as if in the

delay of a moment her courage would fail

her. Now had she yearned for years to

give utterance to the family altar to this

beautiful parable. And should she now,

on the sixtieth anniversary of their great sor-

row. As if impelled by a voice within, she

could not resist, she read with a clear tone,

but soft and low as a harp, the parable of

the 'Prodigal Son.' As she proceeded

she permitted the dark curls to fall lower

and lower, for her eyes were swimming in

tears. She ceased, the hoary man dropped

on his trembling knees, and with an

unpassioned fervor which seemed to lift

him to the very gates of heaven, he poured

out his soul unto God.

For the 'Prodigal Son,' he prayed, the

son 'lost,' and wrestled, like Jacob, for a

blessing. Low sobs and sighs escaped

from heaven's bosom, and little Willie—

name-sake of the lost one—his own, sweet

eyes dewed with sympathetic tears, kissed

away the drops, that fell on his grandmoth-

er's hand. They rose renewed by strength

from above, and as Elizabeth turned to leave

the aged pair, Mr. Carleton placed his

hands on her head, calling her 'My daughter,'

and blessed her.

No sleep came to the eyes of Elizabeth

Bell, as memory brought the pictures of her

life before her. Some bathed in sunlight,

with the dew of hope and happiness spark-

ling on every flower, the heavens without a

cloud, the earth without a thorn;—others,

with a darkening sky, but decked with

golden spots,—and others, shrouded with

clouds, dark, low dark without a tinge to

show the sun behind. She sees herself

a lone orphan, clasped in the arms of her

father's friend and taken home to his heart

and hearth. William Carleton stands be-

fore her, in all his boyish beauty, affection-

ate, generous and noble, striving, without

a selfish thought, for months, yes, even

years, to win her from her grief and loneli-

ness. 'Is it strange,' she asks herself, 'I

loved, ay, almost worshipped him?'

The picture moves—it changes. She is

a woman with a woman's hopes and fears.

He, treading with rapid steps, the road to

fame. She is the star that beams on his

path, and in mutual love they look down

the long vista of life without a fear.

Again it changes—O that she could

close her eyes, weary with weeping on the

realities. That eye, so full of beauty,

burns with a fire which love nor ambition

can never inspire,—that cheek is suffused

with a flush which no unsullied soul never

brings, and all the holy, pure and God-like

attributes are sinking deep, deep in the

slough of inebriety; the cloud deepens—

the tempest descends, whitening the raven

locks of father and mother, and he forsakes

them and her, a miserable besotted wretch.

Hope has faded out from her young life,

leaving it dark and dreary, and she longed

for death—the grim monster seemed to her

an angel of mercy. Then the sad faces of

the aged beings who, so meekly and un-

complaining, bore the cross, looked re-

proachfully on her, and she prayed God to

forgive the wish of her heart, to die.

The thought of the duties to be done,

fell like a blessing, soothing her to sleep.

Still the pictures moved before her, but

the clouds grew thin, and now and then a

stray sunbeam would pierce the blackness;

when suddenly, a scene of wondrous beau-

ty burst on her vision. William Carleton

was before her in unsullied manhood,—a

garland of pure white flowers encircled his

brow, which shone in the brightness of a

star, that burned in glory above him. At

his feet flowed a crystal stream, and at his

right hand an angel radiant with love-

liness, stood with an open scroll, on which

was written in letters of gold, 'Thou art

righteous; thy sins are forgiven thee; and

thy name shall be called righteous.' Little

Willie the youngest lamb of the flock, clung

to his mother's knee from whom he had

been separated a few weeks, with pertina-

cacious devotion, still casting affectionate

glances at his grandmother, as if to assure

her of his unswerving love.

The family circle was unbroken, save

one link. As they gathered around the festi-

val board, the one vacant seat seemed a

mockery of hope. Six times, in six long,

wet, weary years had it stood there, and

still it was empty. They stood reverently,

while the venerable patriarch besought a

blessing—the little ones, with folded hands,

striving, with fast winking eyes, to

shut from their gaze grandmother's tempt-

ing viands. For the 'Prodigal Son,' a

gain he prayed, the son 'lost,' while

the tears rained down his wrinkled cheeks,

when a low, musical voice was heard,

sweeter than any earthly music to the ears

of Elizabeth Bell—'Father I have sinned

against Heaven, and in thy sight, and am

no more worthy to be called thy son,' and

William Carleton appeared to their wondering

gaze, his eyes fastened on the face of Eliza-

beth, which changed like a summer cloud.

He stood before them, a man, with the

impulse of a high and noble soul on his broad

white brow.

The old man seemed paralyzed for a mo-

ment, then opening his arms, which trem-

bled like an aspen, he clasped his son to his

aged breast. Many tears of penitence

mingled with that mother's tear of joy, as

she kissed again and again the brow of her

youngest born. Congratulations were

heaped upon him by brothers and sisters,

in words and accents of love, while Eliza-

beth stood apart, pale and shrinking, unob-

served by all save the white-haired father,

who approached and whispered 'God give

you strength, Elizabeth; let not temptation

overcome you.' She could not speak, but

a faint smile told him he was understood.

Wm. turned from the group that crowded

around him, and with low bowing eyes

approached her, yet scarcely knowing how

to address her. A crimson flush burned

in either cheek, as she stepped forward ki-

ntly and extended her hand. She could

not speak, words found no utterance. A

shade flitted over his face, but he gently

raised her hand to his lips, and turned a-

way.

The viands, so carefully prepared, were

scarcely tasted save by the juvenile por-

tion, who did them ample justice, feeling

themselves privileged to obtain an extra

share on so important an occasion. Was

Elizabeth happy? She knew not that he

came with a pure heart, but that glorious

vision seemed to her a reality, and when

she thought herself unnoticed, she stole a-

way to her room and thanked God with joy

unutterable for the great blessing.

Swiftly, too swiftly, the hours sped, yet

it was late when they separated, and the

hearty 'good night' was repeated, each

one felt the influence of the prayer of

praise, and thanksgiving had fallen like the

dew of peace on their hearts.

Elizabeth was alone by the deserted

table, alone with the communion of her

own spirit. She could hear naught but the

ticking of the clock and the beating of her

heart, beating now that she was alone and

unseen, wildly, as if eager to mark the

moments that were bringing the consumma-

tion of her destiny. For hours, she sat,

absorbed in deep meditation, by the dying

embers, forgetful of sleep, forgetful of every-

thing but him who had appeared before her,

like one from the dead. She had seemed to

live a life-time in the last, few short hours.

The past, that chequered past, was it a delu-

sion? the present, the dawn of a new ex-

istence? and for a weary week? She could

not tell; but O, that vision was still before

her, with the waters of peace gently flow-

ing at his feet. She raised her eyes, as a